

Wm. C. Hooper

LD 2171
1859

B. ORATION

AND

POEM,

DELIVERED BY

FRANCIS V. BALCH,

AND

WM. R. HUNTINGTON.

CLASS DAY, 1859.

A N
O R A T I O N,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

CLASS OF 1859,

JUNE 24, 1859.

BY FRANCIS V. BALCH.



B O S T O N :

ALFRED MUDGE & SON, PRINTERS, 34 SCHOOL STREET.
1860.

ORATION.

WE have been looking forward, Classmates, ever since we first answered to our names in the big white hall yonder, to a day when we should all be together for the last time; when assembled in this church, we should listen, with our fathers and mothers, our brothers, sisters, and friends, to what all think and feel, but one must put into stuttering speech. We have never lost sight of this day; we have looked forward to it from out the smoke of college pipes; we have seen its sights in the embers of the college fires; we have wondered how we should feel; we have poetized about it; we have talked about it; and now it is here. We are now to know feeling instead of sentiment, and find out whether four years' rubbing of the branches and wedding of the bark, makes the sap of one tree run in the veins and arteries of its neighbor, and whether there will be no scar when they are taken up, each with his clod of earth, and transplanted to other groves than those of old Harvard.

Why is it that memory stands sideways, half covered with flowers? Would the ladies tell us that it is because she thinks her profile more beautiful than her full face? I think not.

The pleasures of hope and the pleasures of memory ought to have been written by the same person. To the child, Hope is all in all; she is not half, but wholly covered with flowers, and she looks with full expectant face toward the future. As the child becomes a boy, the boy a man, Hope turns sometimes to watch some object that she has longed for and loved, as it glides past her, by her far into the distance, and then we call her memory.

When manhood is reached, we find her halting half decided, so many of her dearest dreams have, fulfilled or unfulfilled, drifted past her. She stands sideways, now catching a glimpse of the more distant objects, as those near at hand lead and direct her gaze towards them, now turning with eagerness not yet burnt out, towards the future. She is half covered with flowers; half of her original store she has committed to the care of the past. Let us first, then, look back with memory, then, turning, look forward with hope.

And first looking back, we have done, and thought, and felt, just what others have done, and thought, and felt; we have nothing new to offer. But will there ever come a time when we shall read that Mrs. Brown has fallen down the back-stairs and broken an arm with less interest, because Mrs. Smith did just the same thing the day before? Heaven forbid! We rather shout out what a coincidence, and find therein new theme of congratulation. What is it makes all the hens in a barn-yard cackle when one has laid an egg? It is because all have done the same before. It is companionable. If one egg only had been laid since the creation of the world, and the race of hens continued by a miracle, there would not have been half so much noise made about that solitary egg as there is about the common every day event of the barn-yard. You are to hear then an old story; and if you have thought it, or heard it, or read it before, try to like it all the better. Every student of Dickens knows that, with a good hearty purpose to enjoy, and by "making believe very much," orange-peel and water makes itself one with the vintage of Bacchus.

Shakespeare never went to college, or he would have given us pictures of college life, which would not only eternize the men of his own year, or his own university, but which, like certain almanacs, would be adapted to every latitude. We can imagine Hamlet, for instance, entering a Freshman, within the college pale. He is very shy, he looks about him with suspicion that somebody is laughing at him; and yet he has an

intense consciousness that he is to be a great man, and almost confounds *to be*, with *is*. He writes home affectionate letters to Ophelia, and somehow she receives the same impression regarding his destiny. He is so self-contained that he makes few friends; those few, fast ones. He is laughed at a good deal, on account of his queer ways. He begins to have a little of the Pariah look, which misjudgment causes in the misjudged. His letters to Ophelia are sometimes bitter. He takes to smoking as a consolation. He neglects exercise, and has the dyspepsia. He separates himself more and more from his classmates, and is more and more disliked, as a problem vanity-vexing and insoluble. He tries to find ease of mind in severe, unseasonable study. He graduates a dyspeptic, a prey to crazy fancies, the wreck of a noble man, to take his part in the great tragedy. This we should not have been told; we should have been made to feel it, perhaps by a single scene, almost by a single word; and that phase of college life would have been so engraved, that all future attempts at its portrayal must be mere copies from that great eternal graving of the stone.

Mercutio would have come to college a true typical boy at heart, honest, open-hearted, as full of fun as a young colt, and not very fond of study. He would distinguish himself on the foot-ball ground by the good-natured, impartial way in which he would distribute his blows. He would rapidly become a favorite with every part of his class. He would obtain a great reputation for wit, and would be rather dreaded as well as liked, for he would be down on humbug wherever he found it, or thought that he found it. At different parts of his career, he would have a weakness come over him for fine clothes, fine horses and the theatre. But by the pure force of his open, manly heart, he wins through all dangers, and there is no one you are more sorry to shake hands with at parting than Mercutio. But in painting, or photograph, if we had it, we should think natural only what we had ourselves seen or

felt. We have ourselves passed four years of college life, and we ought to be able to learn from memory, without the need of painting or sketch, what that life is.

As we look back, we see at first nothing but confusion. Classmates' faces, now well known and loved, huddle and change, once again strange and first seen. There seems to come a far off clang of bells, as though heard in the drowsy morning hours; now we seem in chapel—now in the recitation room—now at home, dreaming before the fire, or striving to pin our minds to some lesson; lesson as hard, and mind as reluctant, as the wall and fly of an entomologist. But in whatever place we are, the faces are around us, bright, boyish faces, now smiling, now grave. Gradually they become distinct, and scene follows scene. The 16 University, and the first sight of our classmates; the Brattle House, with its eager questionings of how you got off at examination; the second day, with its anxious waiting for the certificate of studentship; the first recitation; the first prayers; the first night spent at our own room; the first meal taken at our boarding-house; the first property in a fellow creature as a chum. All these things were novel and extraordinary at first, but in a week or two seemed like the habits of years. The anxious collation of marks; the whispered confidences, which the face rendered unnecessary, that the whisperer had got eight in mathematics. Evening walks and musings on the bridge. Long letters home, and earnest longing for vacation, as the weeks creep along to Thanksgiving, from Thanksgiving to Christmas, through New Year to the happy day when we go to give our first college experience, and display haply our first coat or beaver at our homes. The long winter evenings, occupied with cards or friendly conversation, dictionaries and slates; bright with firelight and mirth, or dismally blue with the memory of home, and the thought of Zumpt's grammar in the morning. The constant expectation of visits from the higher classes, and the heroic resolves of

resistance thereto. The pleasant evenings of our first College Society, in the little room in the Huhneman Engine House, where we listened to extemporaneous disquisitions upon the nakedness of the land, and the best line of conduct for a man on the same side of the fence with a mad bull. The time of matriculation, and the awe, not unmixed with admiration, with which quiet men looked on the fast fellows who had got privates and were not matriculated. The first leakage of our class, which even at this early stage lost several members by *exosmosis* while repairing the loss by *endosmosis*. The first lessons of the fallibility of that instinct which every man arrogates to himself, and which Thackeray describes when he says he has a nose for a snob, as we find classmates, whom we had thought at first bores and scrubs, made of good companionable stuff. The College wharf, where the boats lay, and where we sat with feet hanging over, and watched the crews embark, and heard the cabalistic words, "toss oars," "back water," and "give way, all." The brigade of amateur surveyors, who, named after the great Apostle, no doubt, were called the Eliot Lancers, and marched through the yard, once or twice a week, to the admiration of all beholders. It is very pleasant now to look back upon the dusty road, the little urchins round the compass, whom we frightened off by threatening to take their bearings; the red of the flag just seen among the leaves at some distant corner; the men with the chain coming, crawling along like the canker worms, those surveyors of the leaves.—The long summer afternoons, when we sat in the wide cushioned window seats, and thought almost complacently of dew dropping from the fourth story, that heaven of Sophomores. The drudgery and delight; the gradual accustomance to the dreary old entries, so commonplace and prison-like; to the queer old rooms, with their shutters and fireplaces; till we hung an association upon every peg, and a love grew like Hecuba's, which at parting made her cling to, and kiss the dusty, worn door-sill of her home. The

first Class-day and the approaching Sophomoredom, which even then seemed to be ours; the examinations, and our supercilious inspection of the candidates for admission, the Freshmen, as we loved to call them.—All these thoughts belong to our Freshman year.

The glories of the first summer vacation separate the two years; then come the greetings round the pump and at the door-steps, on our return as Sophomores. Rather confused, but very lively, is the picture which memory gives me of the foot-ball match. The rushes, the rallies, the jams against the fence, the fair kicks and the unfair; the frantic shouts of “home, home with her!” need to be seen to be understood, as much as Niagara does. Among its battered hats and inspired faces, comes up before me most vividly the old white beaver, with a star and ’59 on its front, and under it the face of him who marshalled us that day, as he will on this more peaceful occasion.

And now that we have got to the Delta, let us stay and see the cricket clubs with their talk about wickets, and bats and English rules, and how this man, who had never before distinguished himself, was a first-rate bowler, and that, a stunning batsman.

If from the Delta we turn to the boat-houses by the river, we shall probably see the same athletic men who figured in the games on land, returning from the race of the ill-fated *Hurons*, to which we rowed down with flags flying, confident of victory as Achilles; and from which we returned wishing very heartily that our boat was a galley, so that we could row through port-holes, and be hidden from the sight of man.

In the second term came the practical experiments in chemistry, our little mortars and pestles and crucibles, our tripods and re-agents. How happy we felt and how wise, how like unto the Alchemists of old, as we brewed our hydro-sulphuric acid, while chum swore his virgin Sophomore oaths, at what he chose to call the infernal *smell*. That Sophomore year flew

by, and though I know nothing about the owl which as the bird of wisdom would not naturally take its departure with the Sophomore year, it is yet certain that bats on midnight wing attended. Some of us, certainly, did not study much, but we had a jolly time; and the loafs round the doorsteps, the frolics at the bakery, the smoking and singing and lightheartedness of that year were very pleasant at the time, even if in sober moments we were obliged to make compromise with our industrial instincts by resolves of work in the to-come.

There was the Sophomore Class supper, worthy of the place where it was held, and the recollections of patriotism which belong to it. First came the mysterious warning that the conveyances would be at a certain whispered spot. The expectant ride in the long, ark-like omnibusses; then the long tables, with the pleasant kindly faces—a better garnishing than any plate; the toasts and songs and ode; and the ride home, with the moon, just setting, tangled among elm boughs; the going to prayers next morning; all these things, overlaid by new pleasures and cares, rise up at the name of Lexington. There was the Institute, if you seek literary reminiscences, with its lectures and papers and debates. But though many pleasant evenings were thus passed in the old room, and in the old chairs, scarred with the inscriptions which, perhaps, our fathers made when they were Sophomores, and wore the crow's feet, which are now elsewhere, upon their sleeve cuffs, and grumbled at commons, that is not our only tie to it.

There we listened to the orators and poets of the Institute, and Hasty Pudding. There have been held our Class-meetings, from the one where we elected our marshalls for the Franklin Statue, to the one where we ballotted for the Navy Club. There, almost concealed in smoke, tipped back, if there was room, upon two legs, we have debated matters of grave concern, and howled down motions of adjournment,

and bothered the chairman by voting on both sides of the same question at once. But for one purpose we have never assembled there. We have never come there, as we have seen class after class, with sober faces and subdued voices, to mourn for a classmate's death; we have never passed that vote, for the wearing of crape on the left arm, which shows that one of our number has been taken from the studies of earth to those of Heaven.

The first term, Junior, is traditionally a term of study, and we formed no exception to the rule.

In this year the struggle between Greeks and anti-Greeks culminated in the overthrow of the former, and the establishment of our Class Society and Club Room. I think that this measure, more than anything that happened during our course, affected our character as a Class. It tended to isolate us from other classes, and to throw us more upon ourselves; it tended to substitute class feeling for society feeling. And as long as college can't be one great Utopian whole, split by no jealousies, divided by no boundary lines, I think class feeling is much preferable to society feeling. The boundary lines of class feeling are more inclusive, and more natural than those of society feeling. I think our Class Society, though not a perfect, was a good means of obtaining its end. It did obtain it in a great measure. I think we owe to it, in great measure, the fact of our being a united class. I think, however fashionable it may have been of late to laugh at the idea of that class unity which a year or two back it was fashionable to boast of, that we really have had a united class. We have had cliques, as all classes have, and our unity has not prevented us, as no sane man would have expected it to, from having individual and conflicting opinions upon matters of general interest; but I do earnestly believe that the tie of classmate, has, in any differences we may have had, been stretched, not broken.

The fate of the Society we all remember, and need not to

be reminded of; the club room filled with papers, and, at first, with classmates; then thinly attended; then almost deserted; the regular meetings well attended and enjoyed to the last. Without it I think our two last years would neither have been so pleasant nor so profitable as they have been.

The first and second exhibitions and mockparts came along and passed in due time, as such things must, but at the close of the year there was a great excitement. It is easy to recall the mill-dam and its houses, Braman's Baths, and the boats in the Back Bay, covered with people, as the pistol signalled the start for the race. How we stood up in our boats, and strained our necks as the Harvard shot ahead; how hoarsely we cheered her, and how anxiously waited her return. How we watched to see that man who bent a little lower to his oar than the rest of the crew; our own stake in the race; who stooped to conquer. It is easy to recall this, for we have just seen it all again; and may it be seen every year till the forgotten traditions of our country shall leave it uncertain whether Bunker Hill monument was raised to commemorate the battle on the height or the victory on the bay.—We should not have had the joy we did in that victory and those which followed it, had it not been for our previous defeats.—Then, with the Senior year came the feeling that we were doing every thing for the last time, and accompanying this, the feeling that, as far as college was concerned, our course was run; our fight fought; and that no effort of ours could materially change the built-up habits of four years. However mistaken this view of the matter may be, it is pretty extensively taken in practice, and accounts for some otherwise perplexing phenomena of the Senior year. Studies are a good deal cast by, there is a general desire to make the most of the joys of college life while it passes. Breezes, from one quarter after another, blow over the ripening grain, and find it flexible. Now every body is going in for sparring, and if you go into any room you see festoons of gloves on the walls,

and very likely, you are invited to have a round with some pugilistic friend. Again, chess is all the rage; and a chess-board is on every table, and Morphy's games are as much a study as were Heenan's rounds before. Again cricket is revived, and every one is to be found upon the Delta.

But with all the childish eagerness for amusement which shows itself more in the young man who is a Senior, than in the young boy who is a Freshman, because the one fears to be thought unmanly, the other does not fear to be called boyish; with all the loitering round the yard, and matching of coppers, and whooping and jollity; the shade of the portal of life is passing over all, and is in part the cause of the merriment which seems so thoughtless. As you catch a man alone in his room, with his feet on the fender, his face is grave, and the blues are frequent and troublesome visitants. The studies, too, tend to this; there is more thought and less drudgery in them; more lectures, less recitation. We are granted the blessing of seeing the noble, kindly face of Agassiz, and hearing from him of the old world creatures. We listen, too, to the lectures on metaphysics, and obtain some idea, at least, of what a disciple must have felt at the feet of Plato, while, listening to the theory of worlds, we feel our minds grow as we listen.

The second term these lectures, though missed, were partly compensated for by the lectures on poetry and history. Nor were the lectures all that the lecturer on poetry gave us. About a dozen started with him to follow Dante through his journey into the other world; those of us who accompanied him through the ever deepening shades of the *Inferno*, the ever brightening ascent of the *Purgatorio*, the glories of the *Paradiso*, will not soon forget either the pleasures or the lessons of the way. Some were left behind in the *Inferno*, some in the *Purgatorio*, five or six persevered to the end, and, near the end of the year, read the concluding glories of the *Paradiso*. If intercourse with noble and honest natures in books and in the body

can do men good, those men, besides some of the happiest hours of their course, will trace to their reading of Dante a higher resolve for life and a more firm hope in death than they would otherwise have had.

When I question memory farther as to the events of that last half of the Senior year, which was hardly here before it was gone, she tells me she has not had time to make them hers; that they yet belong to the present. There is, however, one scene, which, although it belongs to the present, belongs likewise to the past, for it is the crown of our jovial college life. A night which we passed all together; which we passed in song, and merriment, and wine; a morning which found us still at table, and which shone upon us from the east with red eye, as if he, too, had been up all night, while we sang Auld Lang Syne on the beach. To our Class supper not an unpleasant memory belongs; let it be the last recorded scene of our college life.

But what has our *Alma Mater* been doing while we have been munching turnovers in the pantry, or playing marbles in the yard, or conning our lessons in the nursery? Has she kept quietly on with her household matters and got no new apron, built no new sheds, made no more rules, added no foot to her domains? Memory is yet ready for this task.

We entered college at the commencement of the metamorphic period. Old stones that had been in existence for unnumbered years were melting, running, changing in the fierce heat; new strata were forced up from below. With us, entered upon his duties, one who had heard his Master's voice summoning him to preach here the religion of love. It was only for a week or two that we were under the working of the old system, and were called to prayers morning and night.

Then came a dismal time, when we hurried off to prayers with yet unsatisfied hankering for hot cakes, and when at every clash of tumbler or plate, we thought we heard the bell. Then came the system of before-breakfast prayers back again, blessed

to every landlady and student, and the period from which a renewal of good digestion in the college should be dated. The old station house had, soon after our arrival, ceased to sound to the noise of the engine, and had been dedicated to the musical muse, in name at least. There a choir was trained, and now morning services included the singing of a hymn. Soon the rectangular majesty of Boylston began to rise up in the yard, with its solid granite; and Holden, yielding to it its treasures, became a recitation room. Next the chapel was talked of and begun. We can remember the solitary workman who used to be employed upon that structure, who looked as though Marius, tired with moralizing over the ruins of Carthage, had set to work with stone and mortar earnestly to rebuild it. At last it was finished, and we listened to our last prayer in that chapel which had welcomed us as Freshmen, and which had seen us Sophomores, Juniors, Seniors, in its different corners. Though it was inconvenient and small, I think we shall never have the same feeling for the new chapel as for that old room, with its railed side seats; its gallery, where, on Sundays, we were reminded of our sisters and homes by the unwonted and dear sight of women's faces; its red pulpit, its little organ; all we thought stupid enough at the time, but now they seem very pleasant. There we first asked a blessing upon friends, left, perhaps, for the first time, there we made our first appearance in gowns since the era of whistles and alphabets.

Last of all has sprung up, like Aladdin's palace, the new gymnasium. While we were wondering if there ever would be such a thing as a college gymnasium, it was finished, and a new era commenced for college youth. Soon recitations in muscle will be the order of the day, and it will be added to the diplomas that any graduate has a right to run, jump, and box in the yard of the University, or any of the halls or buildings thereof.

Within the last year, too, Graduate's became a student's home, and the Brattle House an inn of court, and all these things seem already as if they had never been otherwise.

And now that we have finished our college life, have run through its changes and transformations, from Freshman to Senior, what have we gained? How does what we are, compare with what we meant to be, and with what we were when we first came here? What were our sub-freshmanic longings, visions, resolutions? Some boys are scholars from their cradle; too pure for dreams of wealth, too young for dreams of love, they see before them the universe waiting for them to come and unlock its mysteries. But those who love knowledge for its own sake are very few. Such love needs the sickly childhood, the stolen hours of study and of musing, the nervous, sensitive, scholarly temperament; it is sorely tried by the rudeness of schoolmates' rough, boisterous natures; the compulsory and distasteful studies of the schoolroom; the glimpses of impossibility which are obtained as, travelling on, day after day, thirsty and footsore, we find well after well, the longed for of morning and the reached of night, fade into the vacuity of a vanished mirage. It is failure, and not effort, that makes the student gray, and stooping, and wrinkled, before his time, so that you can scarcely recognise in him the bold, fiery young man who, a few years before, stood, with his "open sesame," at the gates of the temple of knowledge. So long and bitter a lesson that is, which the world has been learning and forgetting ever since it was, that man knows, and can know, nothing. I do not believe that the lesson will ever be learned for one generation, for one man, by another. It is in the struggle for the impossible that the possible is obtained. If a scientific man, at the present day, can believe that science will yet discover the efficient causes of things; if we see men daily around us going to work, persistently and confidently, to solve problems which the wisest and greatest have failed in; what must have been the dreams of studious youth, when the path of knowledge was hardly tried, when few had come back to report their failure, when no revelation from above

had proclaimed impossibility? What must have been the dreams of Aristotle, when, as a young man, he sought the instructions of Plato? How near must have seemed to him the peak of wisdom; how golden in sunlight the intervening summits; how bridged with purple mist the intervening valleys. It is this faith and zeal which is the life of a scholar. When this is taken away, little by little, by the discovery that the mysteries of life are not for his unassisted reason to solve; that there are limits to the mind which he cannot see but can feel, as the baby, when it stretches out its hands after the moon and feels them strike against the cool glass of the window panes; there seems nothing for him but despair. But soon he finds that love and goodness are around him, not as problems tempting solution, but as consoling friends, just as the child, sobbing at his failure, finds around him his mother's arms. And then he learns that though much is hidden, much is revealed to the earnest searcher, and new strength returns. This lesson learnt, the learner is a Christian scholar. This lesson some learn; and for some the time of pupilage is the four years of college life. To such a one, the looking back must be painful as well as pleasant, as he compares what he has attained with what he purposed; the long, vigorous, unassisted strides with which he meant to gain the goal, changed to the halting steps of one leaning on the staff of other's wisdom, travelling over a road already worn by many feet, perhaps merely to add a handful of gravel to the road-making at the yet unfinished end of the causeway.

But while a few have fought through obstacles, have hewn down trees, and worked for months and years to make themselves a ladder, with firm resolve to plant it on the wall of ignorance and scale its battlements, full of confidence and hope, others have been pushed up to that ladder, because those who had mounted it were held in more repute, or because they had better opportunities for becoming wealthy and powerful. What have these men gained—these who sought only

a diploma and four years' leisure or those who sought wisdom as a charmed sword to make the world tremble in its ignorance, and heap its treasures at their feet? While the true scholarly spirit has learnt, through bruised and bleeding wings, the bars of its body cage, the great majority of us have been engaged in learning that they had any wings at all. Those who came here with no taste for study, have not learned a great many facts, are not great linguists or physicists, and are not likely to be; but while they have aimed at just getting through college, or at obtaining such knowledge of a particular branch as to assist them in future life, they have almost unconsciously acquired, at the same time, a love of knowledge in itself, an opening of the eyelids to the beauty and truth of the universe, if not the firm will to fix the gaze upon it. I think Charles Dickens has praised our College in the fittest terms, for while they do not apply to all its graduates, they certainly do to those we are now speaking of. He says that our College, if it does not always produce scholars, never produces bigots. It not only never produces bigots, but if there is one thing that can be predicated of every graduate of Harvard College,—all the talk about the tyranny of public opinion here, to the contrary notwithstanding,—I think it is that he has a more liberal spirit, more charity for others, more aspirations for himself than he would have had if he had not been here. Some may not think such general improvement a sufficient warrant for what they would call the waste of four years, of the best part of a man's life. If we cannot show our attainments in a tangible form, we are accounted unprofitable servants. I hold that if the servant, who received the one talent, had bought with it seed corn, and then hid it in the ground, his lord would not have chid him, when he returned, and found that he had not given it to the exchangers. I hold that we have been doing just this thing: we have raised up on the ground of our minds yearly crops of clover (which is, in my allegory, mathematics and Latin, ethics and metaphysics), and Time has come along

shortly and cut down our crops. A very small portion we have garnered up, but by far the largest part has lain on the ground, and rotting, fertilized it. I contend that every man (the one even who looks back with most regret on his college course, and we all have opportunities lost, to mourn) has a better clover field than he would have had if he had spent these four years out of college.

We have a field to cultivate, which shall sooner or later come under God's own heaven, have the sunshine of his smile, the rain of angel's tears; that land we must have in the best possible condition for that great and blessed time. These four years have been given us to cultivate, to enrich the land, and to garner up grain for the future, while others have spent them in wringing from the soil, with difficulty, their daily bread. We have had four years to think, to study, to look around us, while others have been at work. If we have not, through most utter recklessness, suffered weeds to choke it, the soil must have had its vigor increased by the rains and dews, the sunshine and shadow of every day, of the every year.

But this is not all that we have gained by our course. What is it that is so hard to leave? We are all sorry, some more sorry and some less, to go. Why is it? It surely is not the recitations that we regret. Is it the beautiful yard, with its noble elms, the paths where we have so often walked, the rooms which we have lived in? No one will ask this question, who has returned to Cambridge during the summer vacation, and seen the trees in full pride of leaves, the buildings standing as of old, and yet all so changed, so saddening, that he cannot bear to look at them. It is that, then, which is here in term-time, and not in vacation, that we love, and feel that we cannot leave. It is the faces of our classmates in the windows, and round the doorsteps, that we miss. We have been together four years, with common pursuits, common pleasures; we have met together at church and recitation rooms, at meals, at

society meetings, at the bookstore, at the post-office, on the road to Mount Auburn, in the cars, everywhere. We have talked to one another on the river, when the moving of the oar became mechanical, and we could, without fear of crabs, watch the sunset; in our rooms, when the fire burning brightly up the chimney, only served to toast one side at a time; in long evening walks, where it seemed almost as though our thoughts spoke, not our tongues. We have learned to know and to love one another as students, classmates, friends; had we gained nothing from college but its friendships, and from friendship nothing but its pleasures, we should have been paid for our four years by the recollections which will give us pleasure through life. But pleasure is not all that college friendship has done for us; it has, in many cases, purified us, encouraged us, given new hope and new motive for effort. It is from these college friends that we are to part, but not for ever; it is for this that we are sad, but not wholly sad.

We should be unworthy of manhood, if we were afraid or sorry to enter upon its duties. Good-bye to the years of pleasure, of sunshine, of youth; but hail to manhood, to life, to work. From the green lanes on to the dusty thoroughfare of life we come, accompanied by hope, just saddening into memory, by strength of will and trust. We should stand, as we look upon the future, with uncovered heads, with prayerful, hopeful, wistful eyes — as we would have Columbus, or Standish have stood, at the bows of their ships, looking on to the continent before.

Some of us think that they have seen life already; they would say, perhaps, that they have seen the elephant, that they know all about it. They have seen the elephant in the charge of his keeper, obedient to the word of command; but have they seen him in his wild state, as crashing through the wait-a-bit thorns, he charges trumpeting upon the hunter. I have never been to Africa, I have never seen life; but I very strongly suspect that life bears very little resemblance to the

four years we have spent here, dependent on our relatives for support, with the troubles and cares of life fenced out by the stone posts and brown rails of the fence yonder. How, then, can we look into the future, if it is so unlike the past? Only, it seems, by looking within. When we go out from college, into life, we shall go, as we went from the last recitation, by different paths, under different trees, to different ends—groups of friends, hanging together for a little while, but separating, losing one after another, as each comes to his own room. But though we separate, we may still be together in purpose, in feeling, while those who keep on the same path longest may be moving with entirely different motives and impulses. The particular path in life which we shall take is, to some, decided; to some, undecided; but that, it seems to me, does not matter so much. We do not look into the future so much to see whether we shall be lawyers or merchants, poor or wealthy, in this place or that, as to see what we shall be as men. Our future is to come from God, and from ourselves; what will *happen* to us, is his part; no curiosity of ours will avail to pierce the mist in that direction; what we shall *do* is our part, that we can partly foretell. I have already compared our college to a nursery of young trees. By studying the twigs, the bark, the folded and unfolding leaves of the buds, we can get at their future; we can tell whether they will bear plums or apples, pears or peaches; but that is not all, they are all grafted. You must look and see whether the tree is sending its blood up into the veins of the graft, or whether it is sending up suckers from the roots. When you have determined these two points about the trees, the rest depends upon the husbandman; they will bear more or less; they will live or die according as the place where he sets them be favorable or unfavorable. So man has two natures, the stock and the graft, his passions and his conscience. His will rules both; his reason is a ready advocate for either before its throne. On these two things depends that part of our future, with which we have to do.

Perhaps we can best discover the nature of our impulses in our day dreams. What, in them, do we look forward to in life? Is your dream a little cottage, with wife and children, just grass land enough behind for a cow, and no ostensible means of support? Or is your dream of a battlefield, where you lead your regiment on to victory, and are enabled to rear yourself just near enough to the perpendicular, after you have received your death wound, to see the enemy flying, and speak a word or two of farewell? Or is it of the Senate House, its large, unruly assembly as still as death, with the magnetism of sympathy binding them all to you, and you to them? Is it of the study, with its lamp and the light of some great discovery breaking over your face? Is it of some retired monastery, where you could spend all your days in thought, uninterrupted, excepting by chants and prayers? Is it of wealth, of power to work your will, to renew the pleasures and luxuries of a Roman, Nerone Consul? Is it a place at the bedside of the sick, at the fireside of the poor?

These are dreams of youth; perhaps we have felt them all; perhaps, Heaven help them! some have never felt any of them. In this matter of fact, skeptical, sneering age, there are some shrivelled up, premature old men, who never have had any dreams, who would not confess it if they had, who would think it weak and wicked to have an ounce of good red blood in their veins, and whose fundamental article of belief is, that the earth is hollow, and made so on purpose for hell to be put in the middle of it. I think this is due in most cases to dyspepsia, but there seem to be some chronic cases. If these men really believed what they think they do, there would be nothing for them to do here but to wait for death. But there seems to be a power in some minds of digesting, or rather swallowing, dreary maxims, without assimilating them much, and without hurting themselves so much as might be expected, just as ostriches can eat iron and stones; and we will hope

that this is the case with these young disciples of the weeping philosophers. To you, then, who have hopes not merely in death, but in life, who think God put us on the earth to live there, not to keep wishing to die, which of these dreams is to you most frequent and most welcome? If you dream of the battle, the senate, the study, you are ambitious. Is your dream of money, you are pleasure loving. Is it of a cottage and retirement, you are indolent and wanting in energy. This nature, whatever it may be, you are to carry into the future with you, and by it your purposes will be in great measure swayed.

But there is that other element of your purposes, conscience yet to discover before we can see the future. Each can see for himself how far conscience has ruled his motives hitherto, and then, knowing the strength of his impulses and their nature, and the strength of his conscience, he can be his own prophet of the issue of the conflict between them. This conflict is the great fact of life; but its object is not the destruction of any part of our nature, but the ruling of it; not the destruction of the stock, but the forcing of its sap to the uses of the graft.

Life has been so often compared to a battle, that it is the very tritest of common-places to repeat it; but still, I think the comparison is wrong; I think life is not a battle, but a campaign. We are born into the world soldiers; there are two standards, we must choose between them; but we are not fighting all the time; we have to plant, to harvest, to build bridges, to do all the work of a soldiery which has to support itself, and yet be constantly ready for surprise and attack.

But this external conflict with evil has its result determined by an inner one. We are told that the shout of an army before it joins battle is an indication of its victory or defeat; that shout tells the issue of the internal struggle of motives on which all depends; it tells which has gained the day in the soldier's breast—coward fear, or noble daring. When

that is known, victory is secure; for even if the soldier dies, he so dies that his death does more for his cause than his life would have done. We are about to come out into a broader field of external warfare than we have ever known before; we are about to have our places assigned us for life. Which side we shall choose will be determined by the issue of our internal conflict; each one must figure that out for himself; but don't let us think that we can get along without fighting; don't let us skulk and hide when the trumpet calls us to battle. This is not meant to be a sermon; the side we take is our own matter; but having chosen it, for God's sake, let us play the part of men. We have had four years to prepare our weapons, let us not let them rust through disuse. If you hope, fight with good courage, trusting for paradise. If you despair, fight all the harder; die like a *wolf* among the hounds, not like a pigeon on its nest.

Harvard College once boasted a military company; I have read an account of it somewhere; how a beautiful lady presented a standard, how valiant speeches were made. I think if that company had gone into action, it would have been on the side of truth and right. May we not form a company too? shall we not fight better, feeling that we are one in purpose though far off?

Before we separate to-night, let us add the tie of comrade in arms to that of classmate; let the shout which we send up this afternoon tell our determination to fight and to conquer, a class one in soul and purpose; and, remembering that courage is more tried in the march, the siege, the camp, than in the battle, pray for patient courage of the God of battles on the eve of our entrance upon the campaign of life.

P O E M .

I.

The Cliffs of Gaspé ! since the mountains were
They 've hemmed the coast from Lawrence to Chaleur.
So high aloft they rear their jagged crest,
The sea gull, peering from her stony nest,
Sees the proud breakers toss their spray below,
But hears no token of the ebb or flow.
So steep, the bird, from out her eyrie gray,
With folded pinion drops upon the prey.
Against these crags, the bastions of the shore,
Twice in the day the hosts of ocean pour.
Mailed in their brightness, crested with the foam,
Mad for assault, the restless legions come ;
Their leader she, who, from her crescent car,
Beckons the ranks, and marshalls all the war.
Twice in the day the strong Atlantic tide
Falls back with murmurs, vanquished and defied,—
While, proudly smiling on the yielded shore,
The Cliffs of Gaspé dream their peril o'er.
But still the Queen her watery ranks assures,
“Forward,” she cries, “the victory yet is yours.
The blows you carry with each onward roll,
Saps the foundation that supports the whole ;
Crumbled already lies the lower wall,
Ere long the shelving battlements shall fall.”

And thus the siege continues, nor in vain,
 For when, with April, suns grow warm again,
 And frosts can hold the o'erhanging crags no more,
 They tumble thundering to the distant shore.
 Not there to linger, as they strike the land,
 The victor waves come shouting up the strand,
 And, step by step, retreating bear away
 Far out to ocean their long looked for prey.
 Long time those fragments, buried in the deep,
 Swept by the stream, their silent courses keep.
 Hidden their motions, all is calm above,
 While still they wander as the currents move.
 The ages pass! at length from out the main,
 Slowly upheaved, those fragments rise again;
 And, builded firm by ocean's tireless hands,
 At last in strength a new-born island stands.
 An island crowned, it may be, with the palm,
 Where naught, save pipe of birds, breaks through the
 perfumed calm.

As Gaspe's Cliffs along the northern strand,
 So by life's sea the homes of learning stand;
 Aloft in air they rear a placid face,
 The great world's surges warring at their base.
 About their brow empyreal breezes play,
 And gently fan the thought of fall away.
 Long *we* have hung upon the parent rock,
 Firm knit, and proof against the billowy shock;
 With quiet hearts and unconcerned, surveyed
 The noisy realms of politics and trade.
 But not forever shelving crags may stand,
 And laugh to scorn an angry Titan's hand.
 The waves must conquer, brothers we must fall
 Sundered and broken from the upper wall.
 To-day the cliff, to-morrow the cold strand;
 Then angry tides, and then farewell to land.

On ocean's bed, where hidden currents stray,
 Unwatched shall each be borne his separate way;
 And last, the years accomplished, once again,
 One here, one there, we rise from out the main.
 So may we rise that our long life's work yield
 Foundation stones, for other times to build
 Strong citadels of truth, where future souls
 May sit, nor feel a fear, while that great ocean rolls.

Now fade the last of boyhood's stars from sight,
 And turning eastward to the wakening light,
 As birds sing "Ave" when the day is born,
 So we would carol to our manhood's morn.
 But carol what? the same old drowsy themes,
 The cloister memories and the cloister dreams?
 Aye, aye, the same, none other were sincere;
 None true, for me to sing, for you to hear.
 Perhaps you'll vote sincerity a bore,
 And say "'Tis true that two and two make four.
 But for all that the fact is somewhat old,
 And heaven will stand though that truth be not told."
 So when the minstrel, for the thousandth time,
 Sings to Sir Knight some ancient battle rhyme,
 My Lady dallies with her falcon's chain,
 Or counts the colors in the oriel pane;
 Or, waxing fretful, "Prythee minstrel mine,
 Sing something new — a song of love or wine."
 But he, "Fair lady I can only sound
 The strains I know, the music I have found;
 My life was shapen in the days of eld,
 I keep the course my steps have ever held."
 Your minstrel so will sing, for well he knows
 That, though the wind still bloweth whence it rose,
 Each freshened blast the constant current brings,
 Sweeps a new music from the Æolian strings.

II.

The College Medley ; *that* shall be
 The poem of to-day.
 This jumble up of man and man,
 And "boy" perhaps you'll say,
 Satirical, but we're not proud,
 So have it your own way.

Perhaps, you'd think to see them there,
 Got up in black and white,
 Each vest a linen moon behind
 The grim dress coat of night ;
 Perhaps, you'd think them all the same—
 What wonder if you might.

But, trust me, it were hard to find
 A figure to express
 The droll variety beneath
 This checker-board of dress.
 The greater can't be typefied,
 Says Whately, by the less.

But here's a figure that will do,
 You must have seen, no doubt,
 Those boards of penny sculpture decked
 So ludicrously out,
 Which artists of the plaster school
 Go balancing about.

Where massive Daniel, togaed stands,
 And glares a white-washed eye
 At mournful Clytie, *vis-a-vis*
 With impudent Paul-Pry ;
 While Fisher Boy and little Sam
 Are grouping on the sly.

Well, *Alma Mater* sports a crown
 Quite like, and since to-day
 She's "bound to sell the choicest lot,"
 As auction people say,
 Suppose we sketch a head or two
 Before they're bid away.

Now, don't expect analysis,
 And all that sort of thing,
 For human nature is a tune
 We, of the unfledg'd wing,
 Had better leave to older birds,
 And not attempt to sing.

For learning character is like
 That harmless rural fun
 Of catching fire-flies by the glow,—
 You think the work is done,
 And straight the portals of the fist
 Draw open, one by one;

But just the moment when the last
 Small finger opens dark,
 Some rods ahead the truant gleams,
 And leaves you to remark,
 Well wing it where you will for me,
 So blaze away old spark.

We knew each other through and through,
 Before six months were turned,
 And ever since have been at work
 Unlearning what we learned;
 Till four years lands us at a point
 That half a one had spurned.

So none of that—we'll only strive
 To paint the outward shows,
 Nor from the moss that wraps the bud,
 Attempt to judge the rose;
 Convinced that, rocket-like, each holds
 More stars than you'd suppose.

"Look pleasant," cries photographer,
 When, having boxed the sun,
 Intent to get the very life,
 He points his light-charged gun;
 While you sit toasting on his fork,
 Until your face is done.

So now, "look pleasant" while you're sketch'd,
 Put on your brightest smile;
 That one, for instance, which you wore
 Beneath your maiden tile.
 But let each countenance parade
 His own peculiar style.

There walks a college sage, behold
 That transcendental gaze!
 He'll cut us; never mind, that's one
 Of his amusing ways.
 He always wears the vacant look
 Of ruminants at graze.

He's up, no doubt, enjoying now
 Some seventh heavenly view.
 Suppose we drag him down to earth—
 Ah, Solon! how d'ye do?
 "Subjectively, I'm very well,
 Objectively, are you?"

There, that's the style—the laws of thought
 Supply his every need;
 The laws of college, what are they?
 Deductive laws, indeed!
 "You cannot get to right," he says,
 "Unless you go to Reid."

A jest from him! when that comes off,
 'T will happen without fail,
 That yonder mastodon will step
 Jocosely o'er his rail,
 Throw open wide his grim old jaws
 And wag his fossil tail.

But laugh at Solon as you will,
 He has a quiet way
 Of turning corners on your heart,
 And making people say,
 That never truer brick than he
 Was baked of mortal clay.

He has his queer ideas of things,
 But yet he's liberal, too;
 And though he thinks your "plane" commands
 A far too narrow view,
 Why what of that, *his* plane's inclined,
 And he'll slide down to you.

In very truth, a child; for though
 Philosophy, he thinks,
 Has clothed his life in coat of mail,
 And fastened well the links,
 The kindly nature hid within
 Will glimmer through the chinks.

But, hark ! a sound ! and what a sound !
 That cannot be a fiddle ;
 Unless, indeed, the poker's at
 A solo on the griddle ;
 A cornet ? no. A flute ? far less.
 O, strange harmonic riddle !

'T is very like that dying shriek,
 The product of the jerk
 The organ-man communicates
 To keep the crank at work ;
 While, stooping down to pick a cent,
 He smiles a grateful smirk.

O, now I'll tell you what it is ;
 That's *practice* with a view
 To such perfection as shall charm
 The proud Pierian few,
 And win, at last, a humble post
 Amid that tuneful crew.

That instrument, what e'er it is,
 He's at the livelong day ;
 He heedeth naught the funny things
 His jeering comrades say ;
 For, singular anomaly,
 It is his work to play.

He's vocal, too, the flowers of song
 He wreathes about his lyre,
 The glee-club knows that voice of old,
 It warbles in the choir ;
 And oft we've heard it through the trees,
 And oft beside the fire.

Go on, O, youth ! thou yet shalt win
 Thine instrumental way ;
 Thou yet shalt blow a lusty blast
 Some Exhibition Day.
 But really, do you blow, or beat,
 Or scrape, or what ? O, say !

But look, here comes our boating friend,
 The Ajax of our race,
 That arm, that shoulder, see them move !
 Come, is not there a grace,
 Your weak Apollo never knew,
 For all his foremost place ?

While winter holds, and, closed in peace
 Stand Braman's temple doors,
 While crooked Charles no longer hears
 The click of racing oars,
 Like other mortals, Ajax lives
 In quiet on our shores.

But when to winter's icy sway
 Succeeds a milder reign,
 And rival boatmen boldly cast
 The gauntlet down again,
 Our couchant lion jumps afoot,
 And shakes his sleepy mane.

" Porridge for twenty, oxen raw !"
 Shouts he of mighty limb ;
 And trains, and trains, and trains away,
 And groweth gaunt and grim ;
 Till, cherub-like, a pair of arms
 Is all that's left of him.

O, then, come on, ye Irishmen !
 Bring out each gallant crew !
 "Red Michael," "Shamrock," "Exile," come,
 And try your luck anew ;
 You've made your boasts for half a year,
 Now come, and prove them true.

They come—they wait—the signal's flash !
 Hurrah ! there start the prow !
 And on they dash, and on they dash,
 While landward cheerings rouse,
 Till, once again, a signal gleams
 Athwart old Harvard's bows.

From roof and casement proudly then
 Patrician victory speaks ;
 But from the long plebeian wall
 Come back Milesian shrieks ;
 And there poor modern Athens stands,
 And blushes for her Greeks.

Enough of this, enough of this ;
 These images of snow,
 We've moulded here are trickling down
 To meet the stream, I know ;
 But still 'twere pleasant, while they thaw,
 To sketch a score or so.

The Ladies' men, that gallant corps,
 Those martyrs to the sex,
 Who wear their haloes, not as crowns,
 But starched about their necks ;
 For so the latest martyr book
 Explicitly directs.

Incipient Sawbones—they who feed
 Their scientific wits
 On poor domestic animals,
 Cut ruthlessly to bits;
 Grimalkin eyes them as they pass,
 And trembles for her kits.

Then, too, the men who study hard,
 And then, the men who don't;
 And then, the men who see the point,
 And then, the men who won't;
 Then, bashful men, who're took aback
 When others take affront.

But, no; our subject points ahead;
 'Tis only half unrolled;
 What's all this medley coming to,
 Cast in the future's mould?
 To meet which solemn query, friend,
 A tale will now be told.

III.

A window yonder looks upon the west —
 A small snug window, cushioned like a nest,
 And nest-like hung among the tree tops high,
 Full fronting on a great blue wall of sky.
 Recumbent here, and fanned by airs of June,
 The pleasant influence of the afternoon
 Comes o'er one, wafting visions without number,—
 A sweet bird music lulling him to slumber.
 So let him sleep, but wake him ere the sun,
 Smiling and flushed because his race is run,
 Assumes the flaming crown his trusty steeds have won.
 From Auburn's turret to the Belmont hills,
 A crimson glory all the horizon fills;

And shooting upwards to each cloudy fold,
 Dyes heaven with hues, earth blushes to behold.
 O ! then our dreamer finds his dreams come true,
 For every cloud that floats about the blue,
 As if himself had all its motions wrought,
 Takes form and color suited to his thought.
 There stands the castle, there the smiling face
 Of her he dreamt should lend the castle grace ;
 And further off are golden fields, and groves,
 And lakes, and islands, and the hills he loves.
 One Afternoon—ere yet had passed away
 The flower wreathed sceptre from the hands of May,
 Beside that window fronting on the sky,
 A dreamer sat and watched the clouds go by.
 The sun was near his setting, and the breeze,
 Full from the west, came fluttering thro' the trees ;
 His thoughts were on the future ; how shall we —
 So soon to start upon our quest — who see,
 From the bright centre where we stand and mark,
 Ten thousand paths ray out into the dark,—
 Choose each the walk *his* feet may best pursue,
 And enter on the maze with hope the only clew.
Four beaten paths are calling us to choose,
 Each points to something it were ill to lose ;
 One to the ships, the warehouse, and the loom ;
 A second, meekly, to the sick man's room.
 A third, to her who holds the balanced scales ;
 A fourth, devoutly, to the altar rails.
 How shall we choose ? the busy wheels are dumb
 That weave the pattern of the years to come.
 More had he uttered, but the evening breeze
 Whispered, " Look westward to yon sunset seas ;"
 He looked, and lo ! those seas were white with sails,
 The wings of nations, and he saw the trails,

The foamy trails of monsters breathing smoke,
 And tearing ocean with their iron stroke.
 Along the coast were stately harbors, lined
 With jutting piers, and cities ranged behind.
 Inland, the mill beside the falling stream,
 And tall lone chimneys garlanded with steam.
 Well pleased he gazed : a noble dream, he said,
 The world of strength, the lordly realms of trade.
 Then rose the breeze, and gathering full and strong,
 Swept to his ears these measured words of song :

O, hark to the clattering anvils !
 O, list to the whistling steam !
 See the engine pulses beating !
 See the restless shuttles gleam !
 And arouse, and join the workers,
 For we have no time to dream.
 The mighty world rolls on and on,
 And circles the shining sun.
 Full many a work have brave men wrought,
 But a work remains to be done.

The anchor-tied ships lie tossing,
 Impatient, upon the bay ;
 Their long straight fingers beckoning,
 And their soundless voices say,
 Come scatter your knowledge o'er the earth,
 And the harvest shall repay ;
 For the patient world rolls on and on,
 And circles the shining sun,
 While the task that is set for man to do,
 Is scarcely yet begun.

You may bridge the ocean courses ;
 You may level the rolling hills ;
 Send joy to the laborer's cottage,
 And fruit to the fields he tills.

And your hands may forge the future,
 If the heart within you wills.
 For the world rolls on, and on, and on,
 And circles the shining sun,
 And roll she shall, while the ages live,
 Till the prize of her race be won.

The song was ended, and the breeze at rest;
 Again the dreamer turned him to the west.
 Gone the bright vision, gone the sails, the smoke,
 Like ghostly fabric at the enchanter's stroke.
 But higher up, above the sunset glow,
 Along the sky, a great white cloud moved slow;
 And from the cloud looked out a pallid face,
 With large, sunk orbs of such a mournful grace,
 And yet *so* human, surely now there lies
 A lurking soul beneath those great cloud eyes.
 So thought the dreamer, when the breeze once more
 From the far verge up-springing as before,
 In tones now faint and low, these words of anguish bore:

O, passer by, the stony street
 Has echoed many a tread to-day;
 In vain I've called the hurrying feet,
 They would not, would not stay.
 But thou, perhaps, canst hear my cry,
 Tho' fevered lips are almost dumb.
 The day is dying; must I die?
 O, come and heal me, come.

'Tis not enough that rich men leave
 Their marble charities to earth;
 The heavenly fingers surely weave
 A garland of more worth

For him who pities while he lives,
 Who walks the world with tender eyes,
 Whose art directs the aid he gives,
 And bids the sick man rise.

But none have found me lonely here,
 Where I so long have lain;
 Ah me! this feeble voice, I fear,
 Will scarce be raised again.
 So, passer by, who'er thou art
 Whose shadow walks my chamber wall,
 If thine's a beating, human heart,
 O hear me, hear me call!

The song was ended, and the breeze at rest;
 Again the dreamer turned him to the west.
 As phantom pictures, from the lantern thrown,
 Melt to new forms before the old are flown,
 So the sad features left the vision's face,
 And sterner lines now lingered in their place.
 Those great cloud-eyes now sparkled in the light,
 Brows like Athena's wore the crown of might;
 The snowy robes majestic motions made,
 One hand the balance held, and one the blade.
 "Justice enthroned!" the dazzled dreamer cries,
 "What call is hers?" again the laden skies
 Sound forth their message as the breezes rise:

Subjects! Children! I, your sovereign,
 Watch you from my mountain throne;
 Discord, stalking blind amongst you,
 Ploughs and plants the fields you own.
 Pluck the kernels from her furrows!
 Pluck them ere the blades be grown!
 Heal the feud of man with brother;
 Mete to each his righteous due;

Guard the orphan and the widow;
 Draw the boundary limits true;
 Check the frenzy of the many;
 Shield the weakness of the few.

Cleave a pathway through the people,
 Climb the granite steps of state;
 Proudly tread the floors of senates,
 Mingle in the mad debate.
 Sounding measured words of wisdom,
 O'er the yells of party hate;
 Gird with law your young Republic,
 Bind her azure zone with might,
 Set the stars upon her scutcheon,
 Bid them shed serenest light,—
 Beacons for the shipwrecked nations,
 Plunging blindly through the night.

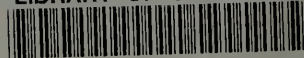
The song was ended, and the breeze at rest;
 Once more the dreamer turned him to the west.
 Like mighty flocks bent homeward to the fold,
 Along the verge the cloudy monsters rolled;
 And gathering thick about the sinking day,
 Caught the rich crimson of his latest ray.
 Piled each on each, in grand confusion cast,
 Long hung they ragged, fashionless, and vast;
 Till, slowly shifting from the huddled swarm,
 At last their beauty floated into form.
 A cloud cathedral, pinnacled with light,
 Stood proudly fronting on approaching night;
 From sculptured niche and jutting corner quaint,
 Looked the calm martyr, or the happy saint.
 Through dappled windows a warm sunshine streamed,
 And, girt with haloes, heads of prophets gleamed.
 Then from the carven doors, wide open flung,
 Came organ melodies, and thus they sung:

O, for a band of loyal hearts !
 In these our faithless days,
 To walk out boldly through the world,
 And God's own banner raise.
 From dull content and curtained ease,
 From shadow lands of doubt,
 To bid all souls come stand where rolls
 Their Captain's battle shout.
 To breathe o'er troubled breasts the word
 That stilled the lake of old ;
 To cheer life's worn out voyagers on,
 Though clouds and mist enfold.
 The fields are yellow — breezy smiles
 About the harvest creep ;
 From heavenly walls the master calls,
 But where are they who reap ?
 Oh, for a shadow of the zeal
 That dared, in elder time,
 To gild the cross upon its shield,
 And seek the holy clime.
 Oh, for a glimmer of the light
 That shone from martyr eyes,
 Through scorn and shame, and smoke and flame,
 Still trustful to the skies !

The breeze fell off, the singing was at rest ;
 The dreamer woke, and turned him to the west.
 The sun was sunk, the cloud had sailed away,
 And one pale planet watched the grave of day.
 What think ye, friends, and was the dreamer mad ?
 Were all the forms with which his fancy clad
 The clouded heavens, idle visions wrought
 From the poor fabric of disordered thought ?
 O, say not thus ! but rather strive to see
 Prophetic gleamings of the things to be.

'Tis true, we're young, our hands are powerless now,
 But hearts are earnest, hope is on our brow.
 Ye seasoned critics, whose complacent eyes
 Watch aspiration with amused surprise;
 Who, from your icy summits, love to throw
 A patron's coldness on the youthful glow.
 Who cry, "Aurora lit our morning too;
 Poor things! but they must learn the lesson new."
 Strive as ye will to dam the freshet flood,
 The impetuous torrent of the early blood.
 Strive as ye will that eager pulse to tame,
 The great boy heart will beat on just the same.
 The hill born fountain, in its upward course,
 Strives still to reach the level of its source,
 But strives in vain, it cannot match its birth,
 The glistening waters tumble back to earth.
 But not disheartened ever more they rise,
 Those glistening waters, eager for the skies.
 So let us rival, with untiring aim,
 The proud head waters whence our being came.
 What though, unequal to the skyward call,
 Forever longing we forever fall?
 The fountain's music whispers through the air,
 'Tis then most God-like, having failed, to dare.
 And now, companions, it is ours to stand,
 And wisely, boldly, choose; then, like a band
 Of sturdy woodsmen, with our axes bright
 Slung over shoulders trustful of their might,
 With blithesome footsteps, let us go to thread
 The mighty forest glooming thick ahead.
 There each to hew his pathway as he will,
 Alone and severed, yet remembering still
 The dewy freshness of the happy ways
 We've trod together in these earlier days,
 While through the twilight shone life's morning star,
 And the grim forest shook its leaves afar.

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